

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5795

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SINGAPORE 3482

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SN

SUBJ: APPROACH OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN SINGAPORE

1. PERHAPS BEST INDICATOR TO DATE THAT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ARE IN OFFING IN NEAR FUTURE WAS SPATE OF REPORTS IN LOCAL PRESS ON JULY 19 AND 20 THAT FOUR ADDITIONAL CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE CREATED FOR NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS. REPORT APPARENTLY ORIGINATED IN CHINESE LANGUAGE SIN CHEW JIT POH ON JULY 19, WAS PICKED UP BY NEW NATION LATER SAME DAY AND APPEARED AS WELL IN STRAITS TIMES (ST) ON JULY 20. LATTER ARTICLE EXPLICITLY STATED THAT ELECTIONS ARE "EXPECTED LATER THIS YEAR". IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT ST ARTICLE MENTIONED LIKELIHOOD THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD BE DISSOLVED AFTER ITS NEXT SITTING WHICH BEGINS ON JULY 23. SINCE A MINIMUM OF THREE MONTHS MUST ELAPSE BETWEEN DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND ELECTIONS, NOVEMBER/DECEMBER WOULD APPEAR TO BE MOST LIKELY TIME FRAME FOR VOTE.

2. THE CREATION OF FOUR NEW CONSTITUENCIES WILL BRING TOTAL TO 69 (NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES WAS INCREASED BY SEVEN IN 1972). IN ADDITION, THE BOUNDARIES OF FIVE OLD CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE AMENDED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INCREASE IN AND SHIFTS OF POPULATION DUE TO URBAN RENEWAL.

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3. ACCORDING TO ST, SEVERAL CIVIL SERVANTS AND A TRADE UNION LEADER WILL BE AMONG PAP CANDIDATES. IT WAS ALSO REPORTED THAT A NEW COMMERCE MINISTRY WOULD BE SET UP AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

4. COMMENT. NO MENTION IS MADE OF PLANS OF POLITICAL GROUPS OTHER THAN PAP TO CONTEST THE ELECTIONS. THE ABSENCE OF SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL DEBATE TO DATE MIGHT INDICATE THAT THE COMING ELECTION WILL MORE CLOSELY MIRROR ITS 1968 PRECURSOR WHEN ONLY SEVEN (OUT OF 58) SEATS WERE CONTESTED THAN THE 1972 ELECTION WHEN 57 (OUT OF 65) WERE CONTESTED. IF A COMMERCE MINISTRY IS ESTABLISHED IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE EXACTLY WHICH RESPONSIBILITIES IT ASSUMES; PRESUMABLY THAT MAJOR LOSER IN TERMS OF BUREAUCRATIC CLOUT WOULD BE THE FINANCE MINISTRY. HOLDRIDGE

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